

# Making Progress in Challenging Times: Rowing in the same direction to end homelessness



Local Government Commission  
Policy Makers Dinner Forum

April 7, 2016

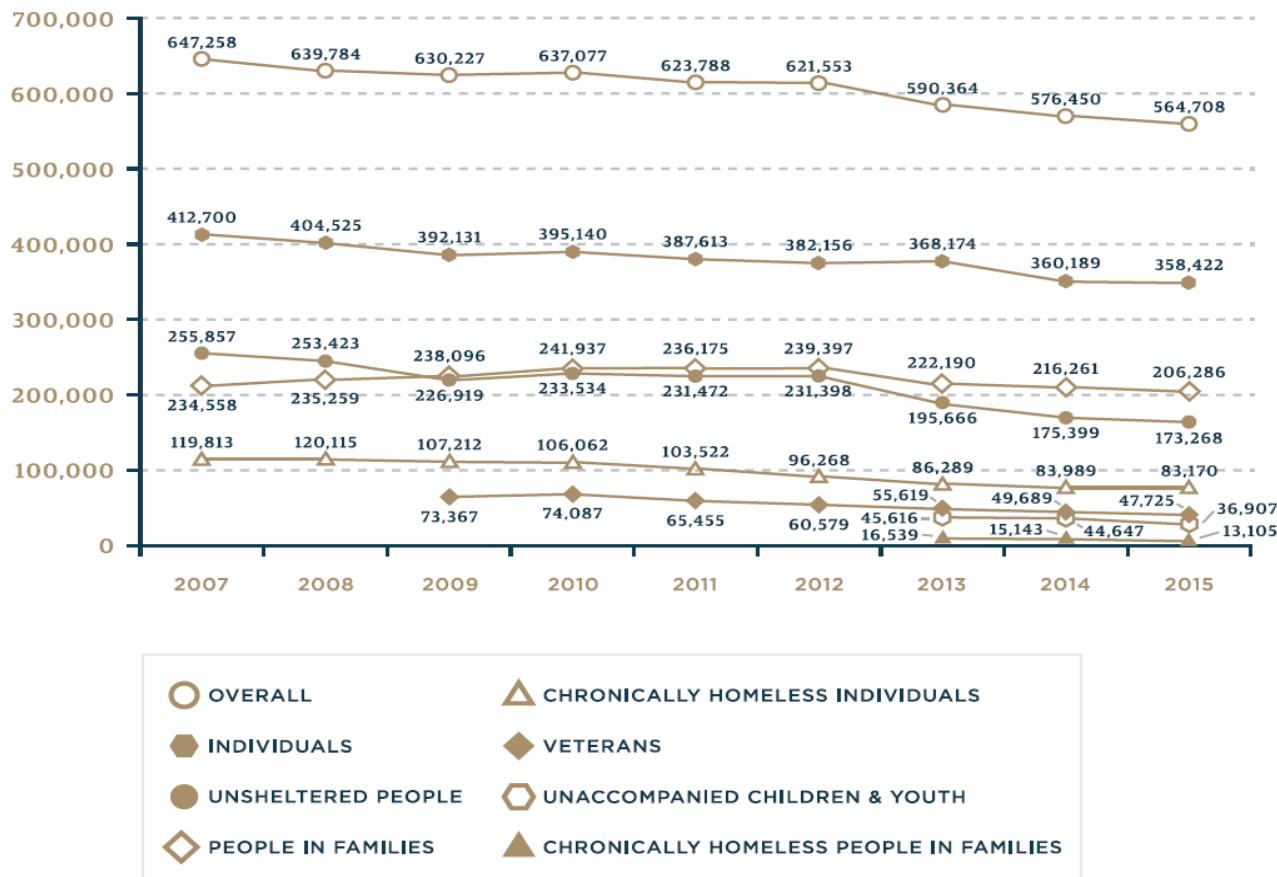
# About Focus Strategies

- Sacramento-based consulting firm working nationally
- Founded to help communities improve use of data to reduce and end homelessness
- Presenting today: Katharine Gale, Principal Associate and former Policy Director for U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness

# Where are we now?

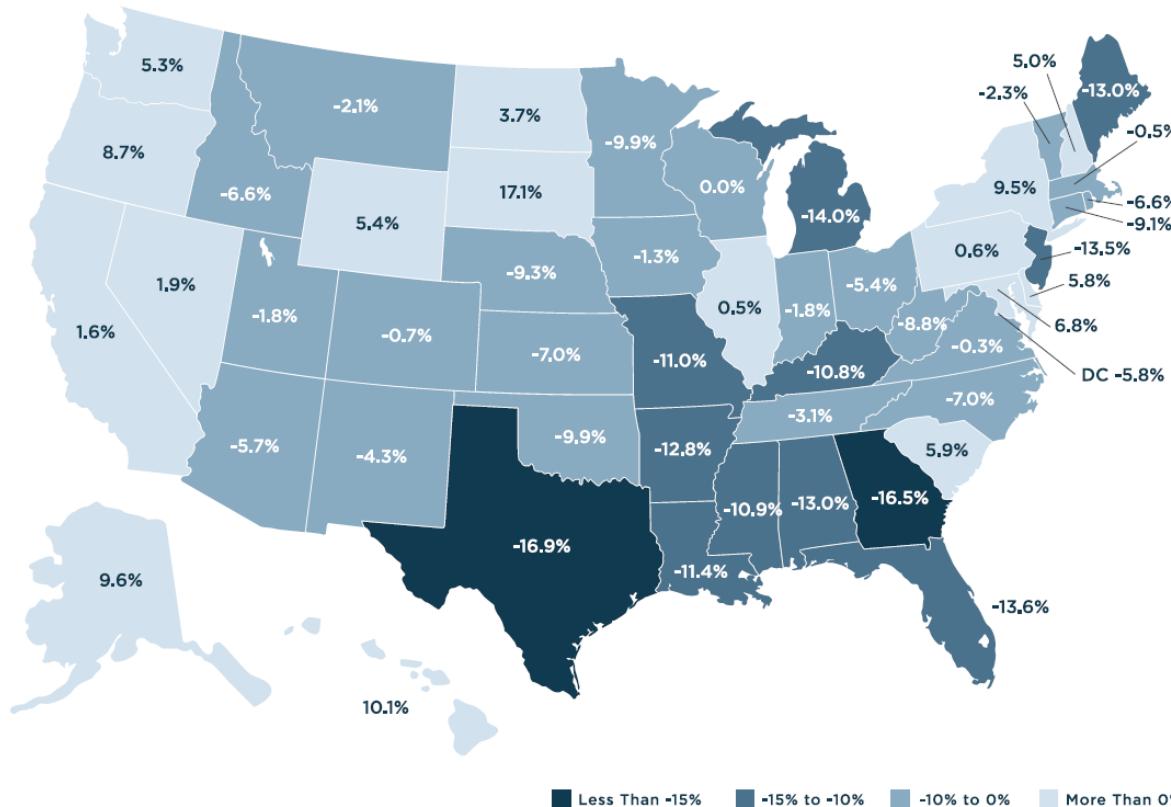
FIGURE 1.3

## SUBPOPULATION TRENDS, 2007-2015



# Where are we now?

MAP 1.1  
CHANGE IN OVERALL HOMELESSNESS, 2014-2015



CHAPTER ONE THE STATE OF HOMELESSNESS IN AMERICA

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# What's Working?

- Focusing on Housing First, *Housing Fast*
- Defining clear goals and resourcing those goals
- Using program models that are successful and well targeted:
  - Permanent Supportive Housing for highest need
  - Rapid Rehousing for most
  - Using affordable housing as part of solution
  - “Diverting” from entering homeless system wherever possible

# What's working

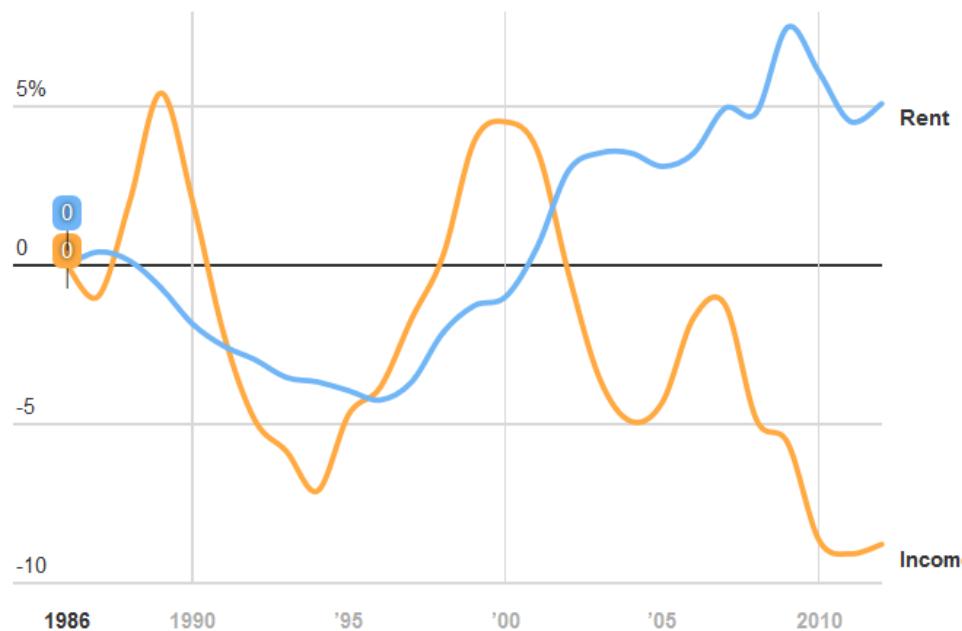
Recognizing homelessness is a condition not a characteristic: housing cures homelessness



# Major Challenges

Housing crunch!! High costs and low vacancy rates present big challenges

The percent change in median renter income compared to median monthly rent since 1986.



# Challenges

- Many parties need to work together – no one entity responsible
- Difficulty separating goal of ending homelessness from other goals
- Challenges knowing what is working and what is being spent (*where's the data?*)
- Change is hard!

# What about the unsheltered crisis?

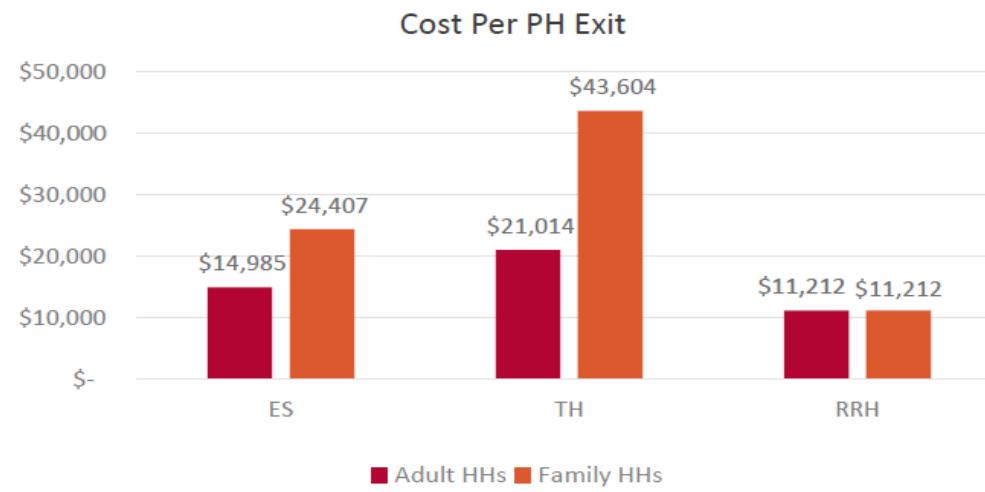
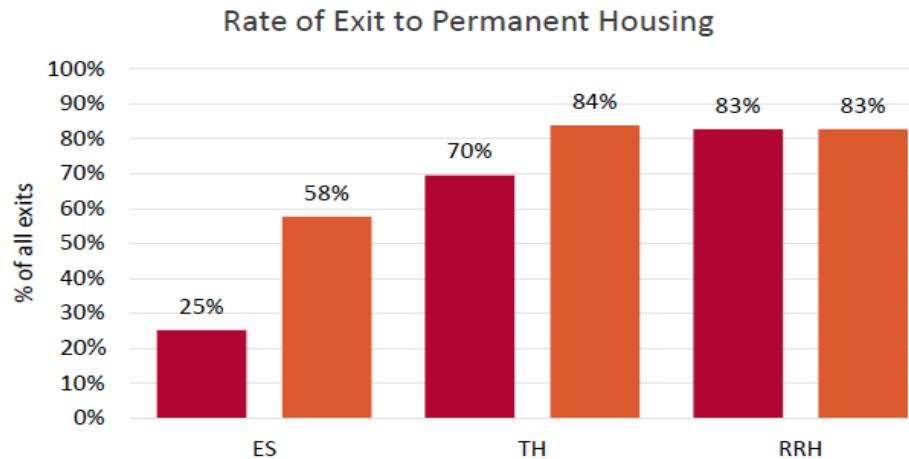
- People should be able to be safe from the elements and meet basic needs
- Shelter, campgrounds, etc. are temporary locations *to do the work from* – not a solution
- A lot can be done through strong outreach
- Efforts to locate, finance, operate temporary settings can drain focus and resources from housing solutions



# Why is data so important?

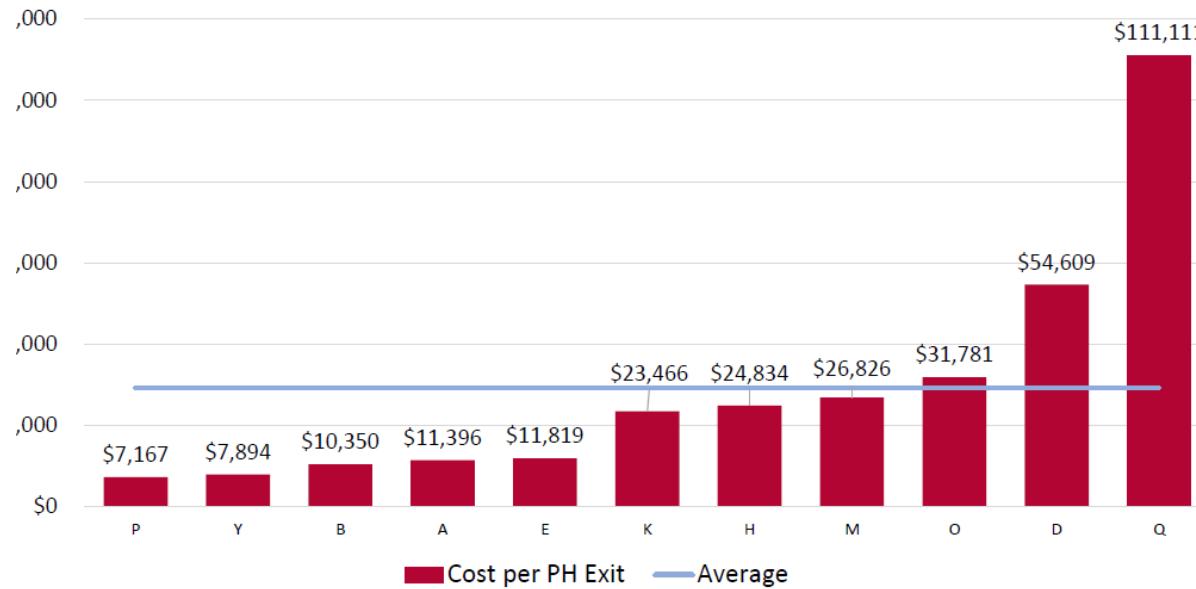
- Only way to know how to target resources
- Only way to hold system and programs accountable
- Only way to know what is changing
- Bottom line: ***You need to know what you are buying and your suppliers need to know what they are selling***

# Knowing how the system performs



# Knowing how programs perform

## Cost per PH Exit from Transitional Housing by Project



# Ask the questions

- How many new people entered our system this year? How many got housing? How many are stuck?
- Are we reaching people on the street? Do we know who they are? How do we prioritize them?
- What kind of outcomes are we getting? (housing rates, time in programs, rates of return)
- What are we spending? What are we buying?

These are not one time questions – an ongoing process that has impact on decisions.

# Rowing in the Same Direction

- Set clear goals – everyone on same page
- Commit to specific outcomes (quick response, success getting into housing, not becoming homeless again)
- Use data to measure and refine approaches
- Align and move resources



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